



PATENT APPLICATION

PATENT AND TRADEMARK OFFICE

BEFORE THE HONORABLE BOARD OF PATENT APPEALS AND INTERFERENCES

In re the Application of

On Appeal from Group: 2176

Toshiaki OKABE et al.

Application No.: 09/725,765

Examiner: R. SINGH

Filed: November 30, 2000

Docket No.: 108001

For: DOCUMENT INTEGRATED MANAGEMENT APPARATUS AND METHOD

REPLY BRIEF

Commissioner for Patents
P.O. Box 1450
Alexandria, VA 22313-1450

Sir:

In section (10) entitled "Response to Argument," the September 5, 2007 Examiner's Answer puts forth several new arguments in response to Appellant's Brief. Appellant will respond to these new arguments in turn.

1. Asserted Combination Does Not Teach Each and Every Feature of Independent Claims 1, 8, 9, 13 and 14

In addressing Appellant's first argument (pgs. 14-15 of Appellant's Brief), the Examiner's Answer on the first full paragraph of pg. 19 improperly construes Appellant's claims as well as teachings of Yanaka. This passage alleges that the claims do not recite "storing original as well as updates/revisions of a document," but acknowledges that the claims do require "that the linkage information include links to the original and the update or revised document or document set." Appellant disagrees as the original and update/revision must each be stored to be linked to.

Independent claim 1, for example, positively recites in the preamble "plural documents stored in plural databases." For example, as shown in Appellant's Figs. 3B, various versions of documents (such as an initial version and a revised version of the wheel document) are stored

and managed by links based on a history identifier (2nd column) and a status identifier relating to a process step (last column). In order for there to be a link "to the original and the update or revised document or document set" both the original and any subsequent updated or revised document must implicitly be stored because a link cannot be maintained to a no longer existent document. Yanaka has no such corresponding structure.

As discussed in Appellant's Brief on pgs. 14-15, Yanaka's asserted Fig. 2 is directed to a primary replica database and a secondary replica database and provides a mechanism to ensure that each includes the most recent updated data sets. Yanaka achieves this by providing the data set 201 with a data identifier 202, a history identifier 203 that points to an update serial number history 207, and attribute data 204 that contains the actual data stored in data set 201 (col. 4, lines 1-36). The update serial number history 207 contains: a node number 205 that identifies a computer originating an update; and an update counter 206 that merely stores a number indicative of the number of times data set 201 has been updated (i.e., replaced with a more current data set).

Yanaka uses this update counter to assess whether to update (replace) the data set. That is, as taught in the Abstract and on col. 7, lines 5-13 of Yanaka, when updated data and the serial number history (i.e., update counter) are received at a database (such as the secondary replica database), the contents of the serial number history (which is just a numeric number such as 1, 2, ...) of the received data is compared with the contents of the serial number history for the stored data to assess whether or not to update the data (i.e., replace it with more current data). Thus, the secondary replica database only retains a single most-recent updated copy of the data, along with a history counter.

Accordingly, because only a single data set is retained, it is not possible for Yanaka to provide "links to the original and the update or revised documents or document sets" as recited in independent claims 1, 8, 9, 13 and 14.

Because the Examiner's Answer on pg. 6 admits that Egendorf also fails to disclose or suggest this feature, a *prima facie* case of obviousness has not been met. Accordingly, independent claims 1, 8, 9, 13 and 14 and claims dependent therefrom distinguish over Egendorf, Yanaka and Bengston.

2. Teachings of Yanaka Are Misconstrued

The Examiner's Answer on the bottom of pg. 18 alleges that in order to determine whether an update for a document exists in a database, "it is necessary that a link or association between the original and updated/revised document be maintained because without a link or association, Yanaka's system would not know if updated data exists for the document." Appellant disagrees.

As discussed above, Yanaka does not compare the actual data, but only the update counters when data is received. There are no links to different versions of the data, only a counter that indicates how many times that data set has been updated (replaced). Prior versions of the data are overwritten with more current data. Therefore, there can be no links to the earlier versions, including the original. However, Yanaka is still able to assess whether newly received data is more current by comparison of the update counter value.

3. Bengston Fails to Overcome Deficiencies of Egendorf and Yanaka

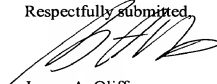
As admitted on pg. 14 of the Examiner's Answer, "neither Egendorf nor Yanaka teach that the documents support one or more of a plurality of process [sic] nor do they teach a status identifier identifying a process step within one of the plurality of processes." For this, the Patent Office relies on Bengston and alleges that one of ordinary skill in the art would look to Bengston's workflow process steps specifying related process data files (documents) to have all documents needed for a process step in order to allow publishers, users, etc. in an organization to execute their assigned process electronically so as to reduce costs compared to performing the process manually. Appellant disagrees.

Bengston is alleged on pg. 15 of the Examiner's Answer to teach "providing status information to indicate the progress of the workflow process steps" (col. 5, lines 29-40).

However, Bengston fails to expressly provide links to original and update or revised documents or document sets based on a status identifier as claimed. Moreover, as Bengston also fails to retain originals and update/revisions, Bengston fails to link "based on the history identifier and based on the status identifier" as recited in independent claims 1, 8, 9, 13, and 14. Accordingly, these claims and claims dependent therefrom distinguish over Egendorf, Yanaka and Bengston.

For the reasons set forth herein and in the Appeal Brief, it is respectfully requested that the rejection of the claims under 35 U.S.C. §103(a) be reversed.

Respectfully submitted,



James A. Oliff
Registration No. 27,075

Stephen P. Catlin
Registration No. 36,101

JAO:SPC/jnm

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OLIFF & BERRIDGE, PLC
P.O. Box 19928
Alexandria, Virginia 22320
Telephone: (703) 836-6400

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